

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

702 KAR 7:125, Pupil attendance

Applicable Statutes or Regulations:

KRS 156.070, 156.160, 157.320, 158.060, 158.070

History/Background:

Existing Policy. The above listed statutes authorize the Kentucky Department of Education to create attendance regulations for Kentucky's local school districts. The attendance regulation provides guidelines for districts to use in calculating student attendance. The regulation also defines entry and withdrawal codes, and provides guidance as to coding of the ethnicity of enrolled students. Further, the regulation currently contains requirements relative to development of the school calendar, which are being recommended for deletion from this regulation and inclusion in a new regulation specifically for that purpose. Thus, the calendar requirements will appear as strikethroughs since that information is being relocated.

Since 2006-07, attendance has been reported as the percent of the day the student is present, based on the actual minutes the student is present, compared to the minutes in the school day. If a student is absent 60 minutes or less for the day, the absence is recorded as a tardy and the student is counted present for the whole day.

The codes for entry and withdrawals have evolved over the years to better track a student's enrollment status. Currently, there is no code to indicate that a student has graduated.

Part of the demographic data captured for each student is race. The race codes are based on federal guidelines to facilitate the reporting of data to the United States Department of Education as required of the department.

The regulatory provisions governing the school calendar are being moved to a separate regulation in order to align the title and content into a single regulation, which should make for easier access and understanding by local districts and stakeholders.

Policy Issues/Options:

The Board may choose to approve one or more of the proposed changes of the wording of various passages. These changes reflect more current terminology and clarify definitions

that have resulted in misunderstanding of current regulation. The changes can be grouped by three major categories below.

Daily attendance – The proposed change in the daily attendance calculated for a student will assign a tardy for any absence less than 35% of the school day, and a half-day absence for any absence that is at least 35% of the school day but at most 84% of the school day. Any absence greater than 84% of the school day will be counted as a whole day absent. Superintendents have requested the changes in the daily attendance calculation as a means to streamline the attendance reporting process at the local district level.

Enrollment codes – The proposed changes in the enrollment codes add new codes for graduation that indicate the number of years in high school needed by the student to fulfill the graduation requirement. They include a code for early graduation as well as a code for students who take longer than the usual four-year period. Also included is a code to identify students who were expected to enroll in a district on the first day but did not actually enroll. The addition of graduation codes will streamline the calculation of yearly graduation rates. The graduation rate is a component of the reports for the No Child Left Behind Act.

Ethnicity and Race Codes – The proposed revisions result from changes promulgated by the federal government. The changes require ethnicity to initially be determined as either Hispanic or Not Hispanic; then the race of the student is identified by selection of at least one of the seven race codes provided in federal guidelines. The ethnicity and race code changes are necessary to comply with federal reporting requirements.

School calendar – The proposed revisions to take this language out of the regulation are an attempt to align the content and title of the regulation to allow for easier access and understanding by the public.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Revising 702 KAR 7:125 should result in clearer guidance to local districts in the area of attendance reporting. This should support our efforts to reach proficiency by 2014 by making this process less time consuming and reducing errors. Any reduction in effort related to attendance can be redirected to other endeavors that facilitate achieving our goal to reach proficiency.

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:

The proposed changes have been presented to the Kentucky Directors of Pupil Personnel (KDPP) Board of Directors. The KDPP board is supportive of the enrollment code changes and the race/ethnicity changes. The KDPP board is not supportive of the change in the attendance calculation. It is the position of the KDPP that the use of the exact percentage of the day is much easier to explain to parents and court officials when dealing with truancy issues.

The Local Superintendents Advisory Council (LSAC) will also review the proposed changes at their upcoming meeting. Their comments will be provided at the meeting via letter from the chair.

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